

Message Text

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46

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NIC-01 OMB-01 IO-14 SAJ-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

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R 031028Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5688

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL BELFAST

C O N F I D E N T I A L DUBLIN 0720

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, PINT, EI

SUBJECT: IRISH WORRIES ABOUT BRITISH WITHDRAWAL

1. WITH SUNNINGDALE AGREEMENT IN DISSARAY, RELATIONS BETWEEN DUBLIN AND LONDON ARE ALSO IN WORSE SHAPE THAN THEY HAVE BEEN FOR MORE THAN A YEAR. WE GATHER THAT IRISH ARE IN THE DARK ABOUT BRITISH INTENTIONS. AT SAME TIME, MAIN TOPIC OF SPECULATION IS POSSIBILITY OF BRITISH WITHDRAWAL FROM NI. IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION, ONE GOI MINISTER SUGGESTS THAT THIS WILL BE SCENARIO: DURING PERIOD OF DIRECT RULE FOR A FEW MONTHS, BRITISH WILL CONSIDER TIGHTENING PURSE STRINGS IN SUCH A WAY AS TO MAKE CLEAR TO PROTESTANTS THAT NI ECONOMY WOULD BE A SHAMBLES WITHOUT BRITISH SUPPORT. THEN ELECTION WILL BE HELD, PERHAPS FOR NI ASSEMBLY ALONE OR PERHAPS AS PART OF BRITISH GENERAL ELECTION. DURING CAMPAIGN, BRITISH WILL MAKE FORMAL WARNING TO EFFECT THAT FUTURE OF NI WILL DEPEND ON WILLINGNESS OF PROTESTANT COMMUNITY TO VOTE FOR CANDIDATES WHO ACCEPT POWER-SHARING. IF PROTESTANTS AGAIN OPT FOR HARD-LINE, ANTI-POWER-SHARING CANDIDATES, BRITISH WILL, UNDER TERMS OF PRE-ELECTION WARNING, GIVE NOTICE OF INTENT TO WITHDRAW FROM NI AT FIXED TIME IN FUTURE. IF PROTESTANTS CHOOSE POWER-SHARING CANDIDATE, SUNNINGDALE AGREEMENT WILL BE BACK IN OPERATION.

2. SCENARIO OF THIS KIND WOULD NATURALLY CAUSE MIXED FEELINGS

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IN DUBLIN. SOME POLITICIANS WITH STRONG REPUBLICAN LEANINGS

ARE URGING BRITISH "DECLARATION OF INTENT" TO SEVER IRISH CONNECTION. MOST MODERATES, HOWEVER, INCLUDING CURRENT GOVT, FEAR THAT CATHOLIC COMMUNITY COULD BE HOPELESSLY EXPOSED WITHOUT BRITISH TROOPS. VIRTUALLY ALL HERE SEEM TO AGREE THAT IRISH ARMY MUST BE RAPIDLY INCREASED IN SIZE, PARTLY TO COPE WITH IRA BUT ALSO IN ORDER TO PROTECT NI CATHOLICS IN EVENT OF BRITISH WITHDRAWAL WHILE HARD-LINE PROTESTANTS ARE IN CHARGE.

3. COMMENT: AS FAR AS WE KNOW, ABOVE SCENARIO IS ENTIRELY SPECULATION, AND IS PROBABLY MUCH MORE SPECIFIC THAN ANY ACTUAL PLANS THAT HAVE BEEN MADE BY BRITISH. AT SAME TIME, SCENARIO SOUNDS RATIONAL. MINISTER WHO ADVANCED IT WAS MODERATE AND WELL-INFORMED.
SORENSEN

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